

Last night, I offered an amendment to H.R. 1, the *Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act*, which would help people living with HIV/AIDS who cannot afford their treatment by reallocating additional funding to our nation's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). I am pleased to report that my amendment was agreed to by a voice vote and thus included in H.R. 1.

It is unconscionable that, in 2011, we often have the resources to save lives but wait until a crisis before taking action. Just this month, thousands of Floridians living with HIV/AIDS were on the verge of losing access to their life-saving drugs as Florida's ADAP ran out of money.

Current funding levels for ADAP are unsustainable. Due to state budget cuts and an increase in the number of individuals who rely on ADAP for HIV/AIDS-related drugs and services, 10 states, including Florida, have had to create ADAP waiting lists and cut services. As of February 3, my home state of Florida has accounted for over half of the 6,001 individuals on ADAP waiting lists nationwide (3,085 individuals). In fact, Florida has the third-highest HIV/AIDS population in the country and the highest rate of new infections.

Ensuring access to treatment remains key to combating HIV/AIDS. Antiretroviral drugs can increase the life expectancy of a person living with HIV/AIDS by at least 24 years. When incorporated into comprehensive strategies, antiretroviral drugs can also help reduce the spread of HIV by up to 92 percent. Currently, the lifetime cost of living with HIV/AIDS is \$618,900. If we do not take action now, the future costs of HIV/AIDS will amount to \$12.1 billion per year, with drugs making up 70 percent of the cost. We cannot afford to turn a blind eye to this crisis; the costs are simply too high.

My amendment reallocates \$14 million from each of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 administrative budgets of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and National Institutes of Health (NIH) in order to provide \$42 million to ADAP. According to the Congressional Budget Office, if enacted, my amendment would save \$1 million in new FY 2011 expenditures. Furthermore, it would have no net budget authority effect for FY 2011.

We can and must do better. I urge my colleagues to support increased funding for our nation's ADAP by voting in favor of my amendment. By reallocating desperately-needed funds to ADAP, we are helping states like Florida ensure that low-income individuals living with HIV/AIDS have

access to the medications and services they need to stay alive while stemming the tide of new infections and saving our nation money in the long-term.